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## **Measuring Implicit Attitudes: A Critical Viewpoint on the Political Cartooning**

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The attitude of cartooning is satirical and convention to a social problem that makes it much different from another art form. Humour is another significant element of this art form, cartoonist by this element attempt to engage with the ruling authority and also communicate something about society widely. Humor along with the critical resonance exists in cartoon form a tendency that constitutes plurality by allowing individual towards progressive and critical thinking. The composition of both significant elements in cartooning constitutes its unique feature that justifies anger and disagreement with the power relation in a different way. Continuing this debate, the paper engages critically with the implicit attitudes and ideology of cartooning that a cartoonist propagates through the social and historical meaning of a particular sign and symbol. In that particular context, attitude and ideology will be treated as integral and much conventional to the morality and value that society often defines or disseminate in a particular social condition through the cartoon. And lastly, the paper argues that the cartooning help conveys the message to a reader's reality and communicate to readers on their level.

**Keywords:** Cartoon, economic power, humor, power relation, social condition

Many scholars comment that cartoon is as an art form appeals politically. It is identified through its plurality of convincing nature in general (Buhle 2006, Edwards 1999, Mascha, 2010, Marin-Arrese 2008). Whereas traditional forms of this art have a hierarchical standard of aesthetics which enforce customary notions of power and conventional hermeneutic pecking order (Maggio, 2007), traditional form in that sense constitute a plurality in the cartoon by allowing individual toward progressive and critical thinking. Moreover, the composition of two significant components in cartoon namely: critical resonance and humor is a unique feature justifies anger and disagreement to the power relation in different ways. The integrated charity of critical and funny resonance not even nurture the people's sensibility toward consistent progressive change but also differentiate its identity and the way of communication from the other art form.

The power of iconography on the other side basis of critical and funny attitudes, as J. Maggio (2007) defines, make its enormous quality that is supportive of the kind of pluralistic sensibility in the society. Thus, iconography using humor and critical resonance, as Smith and Leptich (1963) define, present an idea, a message or a point of view concerning the event, things or situation (p. 38) that appeal widely.

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That's the reason after 1860 political cartoon came to be an important form of political expression (Lively, 1942). It's kind of pluralistic attitudes, and common concern appealed wildly for a novel perspective on an issue. But along with that its character to wider massaging and economy of appeal also made it a readily acceptable propaganda tool (Lively, 1942) and redefined its attitude as dominating during the cold war period. The popularity of the cartoon during the cold war in America indicates its vital role in propaganda communication. As Lucy Shelton Caswell writes to delegitimize enemy, cartoonists have historically used two techniques in their war cartoons- "one is to belittle the enemy. Ridicule replaces venom in the cartoons. Another device used by editorial cartoonists is the glorification of one's own country and its leaders, people and tradition" (p.19). American cartoonists, especially during the First World War, were politically advanced and through different techniques and appropriated metaphors, they narrated stereotypical and more crumbling image of the enemy. Almost all cartoonists those who engage in war cartoon had the prime motivation to deprecate enemy with negative imagery.

Similarly, the representation of women body in contemporary Indian cartoons indicates how do Indian cartoonists involve in creating a stereotypical image of women within society. In this paper, we engage critically with the implicit attitudes and ideology that cartoonist propagates through the social and historical meaning of a particular sign and symbol. In that particular context, attitude and ideology will be treated as integral and much conventional to the morality and value that society often defines or disseminate in a particular condition through the cartoon. The basis of that, cartoon help convey the message to a reader's reality and communicate to readers on their level.

### **Implicit Bias and Visualisation**

Public view about cartoon in India is just an egalitarian and much critical to the power relation, its strength of expression and critical resonance remind a distinctive character that appeals widely to the intellect of the public by calling their considerable attention to issues and event in a society (Sani, Abdulla and so on, 2012). But it is a fact that art of cartooning through the depiction of issue or event appears to be in full political and ideological commitment, the appearance of such characteristics in the cartoon has a close connection to the societal structure that introduces hierarchy and implicit biases through humor and satire. Joseph Boskin (1990), in his work on 'American Political Humor' interestingly, discusses humor and character. He discusses how does humor reflects the nexus of power relation and is sharp with dominating ideology (p.478) and pointed out that humor is bonded with ideological contestation and more emphasizes to maintain a relation to the power structure and decision-making processes. In the case of the cartoon, it could be seen that the anatomy of humor is an implicit character that performs a form to determine human thinking through different forms of symbolic idea, thing, and situation.

In contestation with other elements such as narrative, exaggeration, genre, ideology and humor command an extraordinary consensus among cartoonist and public and lead antagonistic relation with society. Cartoonist and his works, for a reason, is considered as a by-product of all its social and political allies and therefore cartoonist and his work always remains political to be an effective instrument in communication. David Keane (2008), in his study of the cartoon, expose how cartoon as a most effective tool promoted racial discrimination and religious defamation predominantly. Discussing character and power of political cartoon from the racial perspective, he reveals a significant point that before the civil rights movement in the United States of America, portrayal of ethnic and

black sensibility were full of pessimistic. "In particular the depiction of blacks in subservient roles under conditions of segregation or as savages in jungle settings would have raised few eyebrows among white viewers in the 1940 and early 1950s" (p. 851).

Similarly, Tom Olds has also investigated the phenomenon that refers to new racism and racial micro-aggressions where blacks are considered a "matter of othering" and a sign that reflect micro-aggression and racial prejudices against blacks. A similar tendency was happened during the Presidential election of 2008, as Tom Olds shows racial depiction and comments were used in media that created the stereotype image of Barak Obama into the realm of "other." As far as the cartoon is concerned, it symbolized was supposed to derogatory and that creating anti-black sentiment in entire America. Especially, a way of portrayal that is used in American cartoon was a reflection of racial prejudices that inherent in American society. Race in America has been integral to the socio-economic structure. As Ashley ("Woody") Doane (2006) mention that substantial economic and social inequality along with racial line is an ideological pursuit, it often legitimizes discrimination, exclusion and racial stratification (p.256). So the effect of racial prejudices over the way through which cartoon appeal to the public is structural and much emphasis to strive for ideological and political advantage. In this whole phenomenon, Humor and other elements that assimilate the different meaning of social and historical objects in a particular situation perform as a subordinate actor in terms of effective messaging. Because following Nancy Fraser's idea of Culture, it is a fact that humor and other elements such as exaggeration, satire, is "a site that exposes injustice in its own right and determined from economic inequality" (Fraser, 2000). Thus, here at it is very clear that nexus between cartoon's elements and economic inequality and injustice indicate that how does meaning behind the idea on a particular issue is composed and more emphasized to control by dominating forces. Karl Marx in 'The origin of Aesthetic sensibility' defines meaning as an allied constitution of human sensibility.

Human sense, for him, is a unit that defines meaning and rout in the historical, social order. Thus, sense does not exist separately from society; it is not even controlled but also cultivated by social forces such as economic inequality, hierarchy and dominating forces (p. IV). That's the reason; humor evolves in contestation with a structure that reclaims inequality and but does not mean that it reduces hierarchy and social inequality. Rather it maintains a superiority status of an individual basis of advantages that gather individual to define themselves as superior. The claim of the epistemological function of humor, therefore by Hurley, Dennett, and Adam is questionable (cited in Dan Panaet, 2014), they do not recognize the power and determination of economic inequality. As Karl Marx (1932) recognize in 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscript' that the division of labor that is the social character of labor produce division of society basis of labor. Economic inequality, to that our concern, is, also a social character and represented by various social and cultural tools. Humor and other cartoon's elements, in that way, lead biases through propagating dominating values, belief and contested the idea that claims superiority.

### **The Myth of Autonomy and Politics of Struggle**

Following detailed political cartoons analysis tool and objectives, Marion G Muller and Esra Ozcan focus on the iconography of Muhammad in different cartoons and interestingly exposes that how does iconography of Muhammad turn into the political and ideological debate and how did it divide to the entire world into the two segments basis of religion. The grammar of iconography, as they explore, indicates that how racism is integral to the

iconography of Muhammad? And how much efficiently it defines the meaning of iconography? In conclusion, Marion G Muller and Esra Ozcan, from the perspective of Danish cartoon, find out two racial notions that cartoonist defined through the iconography of Muhammad- firstly, the sole ambition of the iconography was to impose western values through disrespecting Muslim religious belief. And secondly, it stigmatizes all Muslim community as 'Muslim terrorists' basis of religious faith. The message of iconography and its emotional connotation were racial that locate to the entire Muslim world as the extremist, basis of that message portrayal of Muhammad through cartoons created illusion across the world that does not represent real thinking either in the Muslim world or in the west. Therefore, the existing exercise of cartoon especially western world is questionable, and it demands much debate about freedom and autonomy that cartoonists claim. The emergence of a new global order that define freedom of expression is a monopoly of global capital that and does not uphold freedom in a real sense.

John A. Lent (2010) has conducted an interesting study on the global cartooning labor force, the main objectives of this study are to contextualize the condition and the way through with corporatize cartooning labor across the world. Discussing dismal working experiences historically and globally, freedom of expression for him is an integral unit to the condition of cartooning labor, the study exposes the condition of cartooning labor is a continuation of a historical situation that has been maintaining dominating social structure in the society. Freedom of expression for that reason is subject to struggle against dominating force in society. Although the study does go through that particular debate, but interestingly identify some conditions, which are imposed by authorities over the cartoonist that strategically restrict to their freedom to report and criticize. As he indicates, cartoonists are often hemmed in by some external factors detrimental to their work habit and in some cases, their survival (p.165). In another case he indicate that the rise of rigorous professional demand enforce disproportionate ratio of men to women in the profession, in hundreds of interview by this author, most of the male cartoonists claim inefficiency, lack of sense of humor and family responsibility in women are the main reason that restricts women's participation in the profession.

The corporatization of cartooning labor force is integral to the existing ideological and political phenomenon that emphasizes to bring out a new condition for production and distribution. Cartooning, in this sense in Daniel Bell (1976)'s view, became increasingly autonomous, making the cartoonist as an opinion maker and determinant to the human sensibility. Along with an emphasis on to create a new condition, it accepts something new in experience and behavior in their own right. These changes come out in search of new aesthetic experience and the detachment from the prior social behavior (p. 14). Christopher Coudwell was an influential Marxist scholar of the early twentieth century. He continues the debate in reference to poetry, and contextualize artistic creation and its relation to the society. He interestingly comes to the point that freedom is not consciousness; rather it is instrumentally used to create illusion and controlled by the uncensored conditions which are regulated by the dominating forces (p. 64). Christopher Coudwell (1973) by this idea exposes a dialectical relationship between artistic creation and society, through that relation artistic creation is not even controlled but also restricted to its right to choose and right to endeavor something critically. Freedom and autonomy in this sense for art particularly political cartoon, in Nancy Fraser's view, is a sight of injustice, in this context economic inequality, which we have discussed in earlier section, represent a system of a particular idea to restrict the cartoonist's right to choose and express their concern to society and social institutions (Fraser, 2000). Change in narrative and character of political

cartooning at present, therefore, is a reflection of economic inequality and this constituent brings out a new paradigm in knowledge creation and distribution.

Now, the narrative of a cartoon that cartoonist uses to appeal widely is an expressive behavior and integral to the new paradigm. The social and political structure that it represents through the symbolic system not even reflects the changing phenomenon of a particular society but also legitimatize to the behavior of that society. The present condition of cartooning labor, as many scholars reveal, is also the reflection of a changing phenomenon of the social and political structure. Art of cartooning therefore along with social and political phenomenon not even realize to entire social condition but also maintain their connection to the societal contradiction in terms of production and distribution of information. That's the reason; its relation to the mode of production cannot be ignored, because the overall societal phenomenon is a combination of productive forces and production relation. Karl Marx defines it as Mode of production to analyzing society in two ways: to analyze the economic base and to analyze the overall structure of societies (Jessop, 1990). Therefore, the Application of mode of production, in terms of political cartooning, emphasize on two determinant factors: economic base and societal structure. To analyze the entire condition of political cartooning, these are the factors interestingly map out implicit dynamics and contradiction that appeal cartoonist to visualize a particular condition. But we cannot discuss more on this aspect; the main ambition of this section in this paper is to explore a particular condition and determinant factor that challenge to the freedom and autonomy of political cartooning. If we look over the entire conditions which are closely linked to cartooning labor, we will find that the composition of the economic base and social structure are the basic determinant and characterize the overall pattern of social reproduction.

The relationship between both the economic base and social structure is very particular to determine the overall social pattern. Therefore, it is a fact that changes in any form of cartooning labor are a result of a change in the economic base and social structure. In any societal phenomenon, as Marta Harnecker (1980) shows, firstly a complex economic structure in which diverse relation of production coexists. One of this relation acquire a tendency to occupy the dominant position and impose their laws of operation on the other. Secondly, a complex ideological structure exists as a continuation of different ideological tendencies and this tendency perform by other existing tendencies (Harnecker, 1980). It means political cartooning itself is a collective experience, and it is integral to the different ideological tendency, and it performs the basis of many existing dominant tendencies that impose their laws of operation on the other. In the case of cartoon these tendencies not even redefine dominant social character and laws that cartoonist operationalize but also maintain a dominant structure basis of dominating tendencies in the society.

Now if we analyze contemporary condition in which cartooning is considered just labor like other, we would find two determinant tendencies that do not simply control to entire labor processes, rather it emphasizes to the other ideological tendencies through their laws of operation. These tendencies by their dominant position and other societal tendencies appeal for a definite stage of development of the method of labor and their social productivity. The market in this sense is a system of economic injustice and capital accumulation, and it is very closer to the existing dominant tendencies of society. Thus, we cannot ignore that the market also has ideological tendencies that intervene in society through a different method of labor and social productivity. That's the reason, cartooning labor, as A. Lemt looks into the state of labor globally, ranging from comic strip writers and political cartoonist to comic book creators and animators. They find two significant

emerging characteristics from the perspective of freedom and autonomy; firstly he emphasizes on internal dominating forces create a condition to force dismal working condition, laboring for poor wages under insecure, strenuous and isolated circumstances and tendencies to work without control over their creation. Secondly, he shows external dominating forces such as government, Market conditions, and religion, the government in this way he exposes conglomerate takeovers of cartooning lead to self-censorship, the narrowing of job opportunities. These two characteristics of the contemporary condition are a central determinant that not even restrict to the entire system of cartoon production and distribution but also attack freedom and autonomy of cartooning labor.

### **Framing Function and the Path to Objectivity**

In the previous section, we have discussed that how do the composition of the economic base and social structure determine to the freedom and autonomy of cartooning labor. We have through discussion on many societal tendencies, pointed out that the composition of economic base and existing societal structure is a primary determinant, and it is only the force that characterizes the overall pattern of social reproduction. Labor in terms of cartooning is socially conditioned, and it does not exist without existing determinant tendencies of the society. In this context, Ruth Thibodeau (1989) has conducted a significant study on "racism and tokenism about New Yorker cartoons." His idea behind this study is to analyze how often blacks characters and whether the proportion of blacks appears as characters and how the proportion of blacks has changed over time. The study, following a racial perspective, has discussed the proportion of black characters and its actual tendencies that cartoon represented over time.

Interestingly, he marked out a significant point that if racial tendencies are imposed and much legitimized by the existing dominating forces, then the representation of racial characters through different sign and symbols are always the basis of the societal condition. But the study unable to addresses the basic question of how does racism affect cartooning labor and its social condition. Gramsci in another way has discussed hegemony and how hegemony is detrimental to the community who survive in unprivileged social condition. Very remarkably he has mentioned, dominating forces historically have been only the force control all the resources in the society and also have created their dominating hegemony over the entire social and economic structure through different ways of cultural practices<sup>1</sup>. Interesting point that he mentioned in his prison notebook is "Hegemony will be exercised by a part of social group over the entire group( p.288), and letter he expose culture has its speculative and religious moment, which coincides with a period of complete hegemony of social group of which it is the expression (p. 697). Therefore, a cartoon in this ways holds a social condition and moment that constitute hegemony of a particular social group.

Hence, the social tendencies that emerged through sign and symbols of the political cartoon are just an exercise of power relation, and it emerges the basis of hierarchical unification that the cartoon leads. Although, the cartoon has have been to tendencies to elaborate popular and much critical opinion into a new subject, but in several ways, it is a tendency that coincides with the complete hegemony of a particular social group. Social determinants, which are instrumental to the power relation, by this formation, control the force of production and relation of production<sup>2</sup> — for the reason that dominating social class in collaboration with the power relation control not only the right that leads cartoonist for the social experience but also forces them towards capitalist morality basis of existing

social determinants. Cartoonist for the sake of their right and privileged social condition uphold capitalist morality and acknowledge a particular social category through their societal activities. Marxist doctrine presents serious analysis on it through discussion on capital and economic power; it mentions capital expend its control beyond the factory and integrated within its circuits of reproduction social and cultural institutions (Bell and Cleaver, 2002). Economic power for them, therefore, has been a central organ and enforcing power relation over the cartoonist's activities. Freedom to question and freedom to express something as its social reflections are objectively defined and also perused by the dominating forces to expend the model of capitalist development. The social relations of classes in capitalist society, as Peter Bell and Harry Cleaver (2002) mention, may be defined as the imposition of work by one social class over the other is happened in commodity form but the other social class struggle against this imposition. It is a very intrinsic relationship between social classes that expose very consistent growth of economic power in terms of cartooning labor and production. That's the reason, professionalism, and the growth is individualistic desire is not separated from the economic power, but it is integrated with its circuits and place more competitive values for labor and production.

Therefore, cartooning is not a form of expression only but the constitution of competitive values and individual experience. It being a source of civilization and social experience, not even dictate our feeling and thinking towards critical engagement but also give a special turn to the new cult of civilization. Josh Greenberg has analyzed this thing in the Canadian context. The cartoon, according to him, in a liberal democracy tends most often to involve an appraisal of state performance and foolish conception of policy through their professional and critical reflection (Greenberg 2002). Author by the discussion on the cartoon and its political sensibility silently indicate cartoonists' professionalize attitude and individualistic desire in term of economic power. Efharis Mascha has highlighted the similar things in her study on Women status in Italian cartoons during fascism. She was shown by a careful study of how the art of cartoons did ideologically performs and projected the notion of women freedom during the Italian fascism. The study focus on contradiction generated by fascism and representation of 'New Women' in political satire, the caricature that she examined, belong to the left discourse.

On the other hand, she also included caricature and cartoons related to fascist discourse in 1920 in their study. But, surprisingly Left and right wing both of them did not seem able to provide any emancipator discourse equal to feminist move (Mascha May 2010). So the study not only contextualized cartoonists' role and its stereotype behavior toward women freedom but also presented a very helpful insight for debate over economic power and capitalist morality in terms of Italian cartoons and its relation to the particular social class.

## Conclusion

The basis of concise discussion on implicit attitude and the ideological root of cartooning, the paper charts out the way and mechanism through which a cartoonist engages with a particular social event or social problem. As we have discussed, the composition of two significant components in the cartoon constitute a unique feature that leads its epistemological function in society. So the integrated charities both elements in a cartoon not even nurture the people's sensibility but also differentiate its identity and the way through which a cartoonist communicate something widely. But one the other side labor particularly cartooning labor is another socially conditioned feature exists in the cartoon,



the basis of social determinant and antagonism between social classes, labor defines the social and historical condition in the cartoon. Labour is only the component apart from humor, and critical resonance defines its significant attitude to the kind of pluralistic sensibility in the society.

Therefore, change in the cartooning labor force is integral to the existing ideological and political phenomenon of a society; it emphasizes to bring out a new condition in cartooning production and distribution. Cartooning, in this sense, appears to be a more autonomous and more competitive in making the cartoonist as an opinion maker and determinant to the human sensibility. That's the reason, Marxist doctrine raises debate over its economic dimension that we have discussed above, and we mentioned that the capital expends its control beyond the factory and integrated within its circuits of reproduction in social and cultural institutions. Economic power through this way, therefore, has been a central organ and enforcing power relation over the cartoonist's activities. Freedom to question and freedom to express something as its social reflections are objectively defined and also perused by the dominating forces to expend the model of capitalist development.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The concept of hegemony has been cited from The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writing 1916-1935, which is edited by David Forgacs and Published in 2000 by New York University Press

<sup>2</sup>Miliband, R (1969) The State in Capitalist Society London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson

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